



DAMAGE TO FORESTS BY HAIL IN NORTH CAROLINA.

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On Thursday afternoon, April 28, a very heavy storm swept across northern Anson County, N. C. Hail fell over a strip extending at least 4 miles east and west, from Ansonville east to Mr. Bennett Nelme's plantation and half a mile wide. The duration of the hailstorm was said to be about three quarters of an hour, but the heaviest lasted only about 15 minutes.

The direction of the storm seemed to be from the northeast as windows on those two sides were broken, and the old paint on those sides of buildings was marked by the large hailstones. It was at the eastern limit of the storm and toward the center of the strip that the worst damage seems to have been done and the heaviest hailstones fell. At Ansonville, according to reliable witnesses, the stones were "from the size of partridge eggs to that of hen eggs," while at the Nelme plantation they were said to be as large as baseballs. Gardens were demolished, many roofs were broken up, and the grain fields destroyed throughout the belt.

Fruit trees, peach and pecan, were almost fatally injured, only the upright branches being sufficiently sound to profitably leave in the orchard. The other branches have very many places where several square inches of bark was knocked off. Few limbs which had more than 3-inch spaces uninjured were seen, when the State forester visited the area six weeks after the storm.

The country visited by this storm varies from rolling to almost level. Probably two-thirds of it is in cultivation and the other third is chiefly second-growth pine, loblolly, short-leaf and long-leaf pines mixed, but mostly loblolly. Some areas had been cut within a couple of years, leaving the smaller trees standing. On one area there were a number of old-growth long-leaf pine trees with the second growth loblolly all around. The damage to the forest seems to have been greater along the middle of the strip, gradually diminishing toward each side. In the belt of greatest damage perhaps half a mile wide and a mile long, the pines have probably less than 10 per cent of the foliage left, most of it having been beaten off, together with the twigs. The ground is still littered with twigs, needles, and cones. So far, there seems to have been no attempt on the part of the trees to put forth new shoots, but probably there has not been time enough for that. Some of the trees have already been attacked by the pine-bark beetle and there seems little power of resistance, as scarcely any gum is secreted where the insects bored into the bark. The chances are that a much smaller number of beetles to each tree will be necessary to kill them. Much pine reproduction, even second or third year seedlings, was killed by the hail, the stems often being badly bruised.

It seems certain that the owner has acted wisely in selling for immediate lumbering the merchantable timber on some 40 acres of the worst damaged forest, although he had planned to hold this for future use and further growth.